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THE TEACHING OF PHILOSOPHY TO PASS-MEN. By Harold P. Cooke. Cambridge: Heffer, 1912. Pp. v, 18.

Mr. Cooke begins this useful and suggestive pamphlet by asserting that at the present time there is, as a result of the growing complexity of life, an eminent need of what he calls "sobriety of mind," "the power of grasping the central issues, of disregarding the irrelevant and trivial." And he lays it down at the outset that "some form of philosophical training, *if satisfactory in form and treatment*, is more likely than other forms of training to cultivate this sobriety of intellect." But the teaching of philosophy to the Pass-men, who form so important a part of the students of our modern universities, suffers, Mr. Cooke urges, from two grave defects. "First of all, philosophical teaching is far too remote from the minds of the pupils; and, secondly, it commonly bears the note or character of continuous lecturing." Thus, for example, in ethics the Pass-man is often given Plato's "Republic" to study, a work which, as Mr. Cooke well says, "demands for its adequate appreciation a knowledge of Attic civilization, of an unfamiliar tongue, of ethical terms of diverse scope and associations from those that are commonly employed to-day."

The result of the remoteness of the subject-matter, and of the manner in which it is taught, is but too often that the student 'crams' the notes he has taken down, and reproduces them in the examination, without any grasp of what it all really means.

Mr. Cooke proposes a remedy for both these defects. He urges that, in accordance with modern psychological principles, and following the example of the great Greek teachers of philosophy, the teaching should connect itself most closely with what is already known to the students. "Are we not driven to conceive," he asks, "that the *modern* Socrates, the *modern* Plato, would begin their instruction in ethics with an inquiry into current ideas of right conduct, of what is good and of what is bad, and would take their texts from the national poets?" Mr. Cooke would have the modern teacher follow the example of the Greeks, too, in imparting instruction largely by conversation.

The second part of this pamphlet consists of an excellent discussion of objections which might be brought against his two

proposals. But I cannot help thinking that Mr. Cooke largely underrates one practical difficulty in the way of teaching by conversation. Mr. Cooke admits that it could not well be carried out with classes much above twenty in number; but suggests that in such cases the classes should be subdivided. Now in many modern universities the Pass courses in philosophy are attended by classes of over one hundred. And it would be impossible to ask the professors or lecturers, who are often over-worked at present, to increase their labors five or sixfold.

G. H. GEACH.

University College, Cardiff, Wales.

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